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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00	HA-09
	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OMB-01	PA-02	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	SNP-01	SP-01
	SSO-00	SS-01	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00	/042W	

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O 021728Z MAR 92 ZFF4  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8785  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 02350

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV, VE  
SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS IN VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL CRISIS,  
- AS OF MARCH 2

REF: A) CARACAS 2332 B) CARACAS 2337

1. SUMMARY. ADDRESSING THE NATION ON FEB. 29,  
PRESIDENT PEREZ (CAP) REFUSED TO RESIGN. CALLS FOR HIS  
RESIGNATION CONTINUED, BUT ON MARCH 1 ACCION DEMOCRATICA  
(AD) RALLIED BEHIND HIM. ACCORDING TO LT. COL. CHAVEZ,  
WHO HEADED THE COUP ATTEMPT, "THE PEOPLE HAVE THE  
MISSION TO CONTINUE" THE STRUGGLE THAT HE BEGAN ON FEB.  
4. END SUMMARY.

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2. CAP'S ADDRESS  
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APPEARING TIRED AND STRAINED, CAP APPEARED ON A  
NATIONWIDE RADIO AND TELEVISION HOOKUP ON FEB. 29 TO  
RESPOND TO RAFAEL CALDERA'S CALL FOR HIS RESIGNATION  
(REF A). HE SAID:

- "I WAS ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL  
PERIOD THAT ENDS ON FEB. 2, 1994. I WILL COMPLY WITH MY

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CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY CARRYING OUT MY DUTIES AS  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC DURING THAT ENTIRE PERIOD. UNCLASSIFIED

- "I HAVE BEEN OPEN TO ALL POSSIBILITIES FOR THE  
SOLUTION OF THIS CRISIS THAT ACCORD WITH OUR  
CONSTITUTION AND WITH GOOD JUDGEMENT. I HAVE CONVERSED  
WITH ALL SECTORS OF THE SOCIETY, I INVITED OTHER PARTIES  
TO FORM PART OF THE CABINET, AND FINALLY I DECIDED TO  
NAME A CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL THAT HAS RECEIVED THE BEST  
ACCEPTANCE FROM ALL SECTORS OF THE COUNTRY."

- "I WILL CONTINUE CONVERSING WITH ALL SECTORS OF THE  
COUNTRY...BUT IN NO WAY WILL I GIVE UP MY CONSTITUTIONAL  
DUTIES."

3. MORE CALLS FOR RESIGNATION

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MEANWHILE, ON THE SAME DAY, CALDERA'S PROPOSAL DREW  
INTEREST AND SOME SUPPORT:

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- ARTURO USLAR PIETRI SAID THAT THE SITUATION IS  
"EXTREMELY GRAVE" AND THAT CAP'S RESIGNATION "COULD BE  
THE CENTRAL AND FUNDAMENTAL DECISION THAT WOULD CHANGE  
THE COURSE OF EVENTS." HOWEVER, HE ALSO STATED, "IF THE  
PRESIDENT WERE TO RESIGN SUDDENLY AND TO DISAPPEAR FROM  
THE POLITICAL SCENE, WHAT COULD COME IS CHAOS."

- ACCORDING TO THE MOVEMENT TOWARD SOCIALISM, FINDING "A  
DEMOCRATIC WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS WOULD BE GREATLY  
FACILITATED IF THE PRESIDENT...WOULD TAKE THE DECISION  
TO RESIGN."

- PROMINENT COPEI POLITICIAN PACIANO PADRON (WHO WOULD  
HAVE BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES  
HAD NOT AD, AND PERHAPS CAP, DEMANDED WITHDRAWAL OF HIS  
CANDIDACY IN RETURN FOR DROPPING THE NOMINATION OF DAVID  
MORALES BELLO FOR THE SENATE PRESIDENCY): "I AGREE FULLY  
WITH RAFAEL CALDERA IN THE SENSE THAT THE PRESIDENT  
SHOULD RESIGN."

- A GROUP CALLED THE "ASSEMBLY OF POOR NEIGHBORHOODS"  
(WHICH WE HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY HEARD OF) ALSO CALLED ON  
CAP TO RESIGN.

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- THE PRESIDENT OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF VENEZUELA  
MADE HEADLINES ON MARCH 2 BY REQUESTING AN "EFFECTIVE  
RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CRISIS" AND ADDING THAT THE  
PROPOSAL FOR CAP'S RESIGNATION "ENTERS INTO THE  
ENVIRONMENT OF PROPOSITIONS, SUGGESTIONS, AND DEMANDS  
THAT CAN BE FORMULATED." HIS CAREFUL QUALIFICATION THAT  
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NEITHER HE NOR THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE WAS ADVOCATING  
THAT SOLUTION APPEARED TO BE DOWNPLAYED BY THE PRESS.

4. SUPPORT FOR CAP  
- -----

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEN) OF AD MET ON  
MARCH 1 AND ISSUED A STATEMENT BACKING CAP -- "AD  
TOTALLY SHARES (CAP'S) DECISION NOT TO ALTER THE COURSE  
OF COMPLETION OF HIS DUTIES AS CHIEF OF STATE UNTIL THE  
TERMINATION OF HIS CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD." TWO COPEI  
POLITICIANS SHOWED LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE CALDERA

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SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS IN VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL CRISIS,  
PROPOSAL:

- SEN. PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR, A MEMBER OF THE CONSULTATIVE  
COUNCIL, SAID, "A LESS TRAUMATIC SOLUTION CAN BE SOUGHT."

- DEPUTY GUSTAVO TARRE BRICENO, WHO HEADS THE  
PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF EDUARDO FERNANDEZ, CALLED CAP'S  
RESIGNATION LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE ISSUE OF CONVOKING A  
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

5. CHAVEZ SPEAKS

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ON MARCH 2 EL NACIONAL PRINTED AN INTERVIEW WITH COUP  
LEADER HUGO CHAVEZ, OBTAINED BY A REPORTER WHO GAINED  
ACCESS TO HIM BY PRETENDING TO BE A RELATIVE. ACCORDING  
TO CHAVEZ,

- "I DON'T SHARE THE APPRECIATION OF PRESIDENT BUSH  
(THAT CAP IS A DEMOCRATIC LATIN AMERICAN LEADER). I  
SIMPLY INVITE BUSH TO COME TO VENEZUELA AND MEET WITH  
US, NOT WITH THE OLIGARCHY; HERE WE CAN CONVERSE ABOUT  
THAT SUBJECT...ABROAD (CAP) HAS TRICKED EVERYBODY, BUT  
HERE HE CAN NO LONGER TRICK ANYBODY."

- (WHEN ASKED WHAT HE MEANT ON FEB. 4 WHEN HE SAID THE  
COUP ATTEMPT WAS OVER "FOR NOW.") "FOR NOW AND ALWAYS.  
THAT PHRASE IS THE BEGINNING OF THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE,  
THAT WE STARTED AND THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE THE MISSION TO  
CONTINUE. ALREADY THE PROTESTS ARE BEGINNING TO BE  
HEARD."  
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